1565

Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

Fortune favors Zola in his contest for a seat in the French Academy. During a single fortnight in the month of October death caused three vacancies in the ranks of the Immortals. This tells for Zola in three ways. First, those who have died were hostile to Zola's candidacy, which fact will lessen the vote against him; second, it is unlikely that three candidates of sufficient calibre to cope with Zola successfully can be discovered in so short a time; third, with so many elections to occur there will be ample opportunity for vote-trading, to which academicians seem to be as prone as politicians, and many of Zola's enemies will vote for him in order to get the votes of his friends for their own favorite. It is pretty safe to say that Zola will be one of the Forty within a year. But the honor to the Academy will be greater than the honor to Zola. His fame is more enduring already than that of any one within its circle. He does not need the Academy's green coat to keep his memory green. His election, however, though it cannot give him glory, will place the stamp of respectability upon all that he has done. One very marked and healthy effect will be the narrowing of the margin of obscenity. When the author of "La Terre" sits with the Immortals, courts will have to revise their definitions of indecency, and critics will have to quit throwing mud.

The recent strike at Carmaux, France, was followed by an agitation for compulsory arbitration of disputes between capital and labor. There was a lively fight over it in the French Chamber, which fortunately had the good sense to vote the measure down. Of all the demands made upon government in the interest of labor this is perhaps the most foolish. I wonder if it has ever occurred to the laborers who make it that to grant their desire would be to deny that cherished right to strike upon which they have insisted so strenuously and for so many years. Suppose, for instance, a body of operatives decide to strike in defence of an interest which they deem vital and to maintain which they are prepared and determined to struggle to the end. Immediately comes along the board of arbitration, which compels strikers and employers to present their case and then renders a decision. Suppose the decision is adverse to the strikers. They are bound to accept it, the arbitration being compulsory, or suffer the penalty, — for there is no law without a penalty. What then has become of their right to strike? It has been destroyed. They can ask for what they want; a higher power immediately decides whether they can have it; and from this decision there is no appeal. Labor thus would be prohibited by law from struggling for its rights. And yet labor is so short-sighted that it asks for this very prohibition!

On the fourth of March, 1892, Charles A. Dana confidently asserted in the "Sun" that on the fourth of March, 1893, David B. Hill would take the presidential oath. To try to make this prediction good, Mr. Dana further asserted, and reiterated his assertion up to the time of the Democratic national convention, that Cleveland could not by any possibility carry New York, and that those who talked of electing him without the aid of New York were absurd rainbow-chasers. Well, the event proves that Hill will not take the presidential oath, that Cleveland carried New York, and that he carried so many other States that he could have dispensed, not only with New York, but with New Jersey and Connecticut, and still have had votes to spare. Mr. Charles A. Dana has fastened upon himself the epithet which he has so often hurled at Grover Cleveland; henceforth he must be known as the Stuffed Prophet. He tries to wriggle out of his predicament by declaring that the reasoning of those who claim that New York's votes could have been taken out of the list without changing the result is "like a jeer at the man who first scaled the walls, because he was not alone at the city's destruction. . . . New York formed and led the Democratic procession from first to last." What nonsense! What cheek! What transparent humbug! The walls were scaled in Chicago when Cleveland was nominated in the face of a solid phalanx of seventy-two New York delegates, who fought him bitterly. If they had prevented his nomination and secured the nomination of Hill, then indeed New York would have led the Democratic procession, — not to victory, but to certain defeat. As it was, it constituted the tail of the procession, in which capacity, it must be admitted, it did some powerful wagging.

Renan's Influence.

[Rane in Le Matin.]

Today we are confronted with the question whether the work of Renan has been more harmful than useful to religion, to Christianity. To me the reply is not doubtful. The church, in pursuing Renan with its hatred, is silly. He left the church, it is true, but he gave fresh life to the religious sentiment. He has been to Auguste Comte, to Littré, to Proudhon, what Jean Jacques Rousseau was to Voltaire, to Diderot, to the Encyclopædists, — a reactionary. He resuscitated a new Jesus, appropriate to the time; the first was enough. He is the creator of a delicate, but insipid religiosity. From this point of view Renan's influence has been great, but deplorable. The young generations are impregnated with Renanism. The mystico-neo-Christian reaction which we see spreading about us proceeds from Renan. It is not a famous service that he has thus rendered us. He is the inspirer of the dramatic poets who give representations of the "Passions," and of the painters who exhibit Jesus among the Anarchists, — Jesus-Ravachols. M. Béraud may not suspect it, but Renan is his master.

In 1866, the year of the publication of Renan's "Apôtres," I was a collaborator with Frédéric Morin, Castagnary, J. J. Weiss, Hervé, Sarcey, and Louis Combes on a journal now forgotten, the "Nain Jaune." We had not the right, under penalty of immediate suppression, to discuss politics, but that did not prevent us from carrying on a lively opposition. For militant journalists this was an opportunity for amusing gymnastics. It fell to me to criticise "Les Apôtres." I wrote: "One easily fancies M. Renan living in the Roman Empire which he describes with a fawning and amorous pen. He would have been then a Greek slave, escaping, thanks to a rich and powerful master, the cares of material life; indifferent to the agitations of the market-place, where he would have been elbowed by coarse people; taking pleasure in the servitude of his country; devoted to the cultivation of *belles-lettres*, an artist to the marrow of his bones; seeking philosophic truth with a purely platonic ardor; writing, in short, without persistent love, without lasting hatred, with supreme indifference and as if for a deserted planet." This last expression is M. Renan's own.

The judgment is severe, it is harsh, and one or two words are excessive; but it is just in its charge that Renan felt no interest in political liberty. It was indifferent to him, provided he had the liberty to philosophize. "One may say without paradox," he writes somewhere, "that the Roman Empire was an era of liberty. The liberty to think only gained by the new *régime*. This liberty always fares better under a king or a prince than under jealous and narrow-minded *bourgeois*." Renan admitted that under the Roman Empire more than one arbitrary act was committed against the philosophers, but it was because these philosophers had seen fit to occupy themselves with something besides philosophy.

This is true, and it shows us Renan's political ideal. Moreover, he never concealed it. He would have enjoyed living under a liberal Cæsar, a Cæsar Mæcenas. His dream was the good tyrant, the delicious tyrant, assuring the delicate and the refined a happy existence and permitting them to philosophize at their ease.

Let Voting Anarchists Ponder This.

[After-Election Speech by Chauncey M. Depew.]

"Why," I said today to a prominent Democratic Congressman, "do you intend to carry out the Chicago platform? Do you intend to repeal the protective tariff? Do you intend to repeal the ten per cent. tax on State banks? Do you intend to repeal the existing laws in regard to the currency?"

"Brother Depew," he said, "platforms are made to get in on, not to stand on."

An Easy Question.

[Gil Blas.]

A new member of the *demi-monde* in conversation with one of the old guard:

"It is very odd," said the former, "all my friends are married men. Where, then, do the bachelors go for" . . . .

"To your friends' wives, you simpleton."

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the cadastre, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel."—PROUDHON.

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Governor Altgeld's First Duty.

I do not know, but I presume that in Illinois the governor has the pardoning power. In a few weeks John P. Altgeld will be the governor of Illinois. According to all accounts John P. Altgeld is a liberal and an honest man. He takes an interest in reformatory themes. Prison reform especially interests him. He has written a book upon it. That the innocent should suffer with the guilty is shocking to his sense of justice.

Encouraged by these considerations, Liberty takes this early opportunity to remind Judge Altgeld that there are three men confined in the prison at Joliet whom he knows to be certainly innocent of any crime; that they have been there five years; that, unless some power intervenes, one of them will stay there ten years longer and the two others will come out only in their coffins; that they were thrown into this dungeon through the infamous machinations of conspirators in the service of capital; that it will soon be in his power to set them free; that this deed of liberation should be his first gubernatorial act; that every day's delay on his part will make him responsible for the robbery of three innocent men's liberty for an extra twenty-four hours; and that permanent neglect of this opportunity to do justice will render him answerable for every day's confinement that they suffer, not only during, but after his term of office, and will send his name down to posterity in an unenviable association with that of Gary.

On the other hand, if he restores Samuel Fielden, Michael Schwab, and Oscar Neebe to liberty, he and his party will be branded as Anarchists, and capital will bring all its power to bear to ruin both.

The governorship of Illinois will subject Judge Altgeld's quality to a very severe test. Liberty hopes and believes that he will meet it like the brave man that he is said to be. T.

Up in a Balloon.

Well, if I had not seen it, I would not have believed it. Although I have heretofore had occasion to record my opinion in these columns that Mr. Yarros, despite outward evidences to the contrary, is an impressionable man, more than usually susceptible to the passing influence of time and place and surroundings, I confess that I was unprepared for the thorough confirmation which that opinion now receives from the boyish enthusiasm and soaring eloquence with which he celebrates the Democratic victory. Encouraging as it is to Mr. Yarros to find the people, as he thinks, less gullible than the Republicans supposed, still greater is my discouragement at finding an Anarchist of as long standing, as clear perception, and as comprehensive grasp as his more gullible than even a half-baked Anarchist or the rawest recruit in the ranks has any right to be. I do not look with "faint regret" upon the result that is before us; I do not even view it with "*absolute* indifference"; so far as I can detect within me any lurking preference for either of the two chief parties, it is for the Democracy, and my present feeling is one of division between this preference and the dread that I have of what may follow the Democracy's financial policy. But even were this dread entirely absent, the slight balance of satisfaction that I should then feel would not fill me with that exuberant joy which saturates and overflows the soul of Mr. Yarros. When a tyrant who has been compelling me to drag after me a ball weighing one hundred pounds is superseded by another who replaces this ball with one weighing only ninety-nine, I theoretically rejoice at the political revolution which has given my new master possession of my leg; but practically I do not care a picayune. I find the difference in the weight imperceptible, and the thought of my intolerable burden so possesses me that, far from having any disposition to throw up my hat and shout "Marvellous!" "Magnificent!" my uppermost feeling is one of vengeful anticipation of the violent contact that is certain to ensue between my foot and the new tyrant's posterior as soon as my leg is once free. But one would think from Mr. Yarros's buoyancy that the ball had become a balloon.

And yet, after all his expressions of delight, he turns to assure us that he expects "nothing, absolutely nothing," from the Democracy for the cause of liberty. I do not go so far Though less exuberant, I am more expectant. I expect, for instance, as I indicate elsewhere, that Governor Altgeld will free Fielden, Schwab, and Neebe, unless Governor Fifer does it before him. This will be a distinct gain for liberty. I expect that there will be less of petty tyranny in the post-office department. And I expect some other things. But these, together with the pension and other reforms which Mr. Yarros foresees, will, after all, only make the hundred-pound ball one pound lighter.

On the score of corruption the difference between the two parties is still less. In the procession of thieves Tammany Hall is never far behind the band-wagon. If the Republicans have stolen most, it is largely because of their greater opportunity. Mr. Yarros seems to prefer hypocritical corruption to shameless corruption. I do not. In fact, this partly explains my slight preference for the Democrats. Here Mr. Yarros is mistaken in his facts. It is the Tammany sachem who is shamelessly corrupt; the hypocrite is John Wanamaker. I prefer the Tammany sachem. Mr. Yarros's alternations, in one sentence saying all that he can find to say in favor of the Democrats and in the next protesting his utter lack of confidence in them, remind me of nothing so much as the attitude of Patience, the village milkmaid, toward Algernon Grosvenor. After rejecting his offer of marriage, Patience describes to Algernon her ecstatic love for him in tantalizing terms, and then, every time that he turns as if encouraged to embrace her, she draws suddenly back with the warning, "Not another step, sir, or I scream!" Patience loves Algernon fervently, but, having been taught that such love is selfish, she repels him from a sense of duty. Mr. Yarros, being a little ashamed of his heart, excuses the Democrats rather than glorifies them, but it is always apparent that he would like to say very much more; on the other hand, when, in obedience to his Anarchistic philosophy, he has to condemn the Democrats, although there is no uncertainty in his words, their utterance seems a little like pulling teeth. The difference between Patience and Mr. Yarros is this: her heart is right, but her head is in error; his head is right, but his heart is in error.

Mr. Yarros rejoices because certain things are done with forever. Perhaps, and perhaps not. Forever is a long time. I am inclined to agree that the Grand Army has lost its grip; but it would not surprise me in the least to see a reaction in favor of high tariff; indeed, I half expect it. And I am perfectly sure that the "wild-cat cry," far from being played out, has just done most effective work and is ready to do more at the first opportunity. It has scared the Democrats, with a few exceptions, into utter silence on the banking question, and their dread of it will insure on their part, for a long time to come, a policy of masterly inactivity. "Irreparable disasters" are no new thing in politics; their most astonishing feature is the speed with which they are generally repaired. I have seen the fortunes of the Democracy at a far lower ebb than has yet been reached by Republicanism, but to-day it is on top again. Republicanism seems to me equally likely to experience a revival. It may return to power in some new garb, State Socialistic or other; if so, so much the worse. Though it sees its rival in full possession of the Capitol, it knows that the Tarpeian Rock is near, and it will await its hour. At the proper time it will again find welcome at the people's hands. Mr. Yarros need not count on popular disgust with government as a result of Democratic misrule. The great mass of voters will not lose faith in government until economic reform has been put in operation without the aid of government and in spite of it; then indeed they will abandon politics altogether; but until then they will continue to oscillate from party to party, their confidence in government unshaken, quite as gullible as ever.

Democracy, to avoid its downfall, will disap-

point Mr. Yarros in another particular. Instead of pursuing the do nothing course that he anticipates, it will make some startlingly high bids for the support of the do-everythings, the paternalists. I look to see the next four years eclipse all previous records of Congressional paternalism. Has Mr. Yarros forgotten that the tallest piece of paternal doctrine ever uttered upon the floor of Congress was advanced within a very few months by one of the Democracy's most venerated and trusted leaders, Senator John M. Palmer of Illinois? Many other members of the party are tending very strongly in the same direction. With this tendency already existing, how will it be possible for the party to withstand the temptations that will be offered it? According to the present outlook, a handful of State Socialists will have the balance of power in the United States Senate. These will be the most important, the most influential, the most powerful men in the country. No legislation can be effected without their votes. Both Republicans and Democrats will want them, and will bid against each other to get them. And under such circumstances Mr. Yarros expects that a few radical Democrats will be able to hold the party to the let-alone policy! Well, we shall see.

The present confident and credulous condition of Mr. Yarros's mind leads him to believe that the people will reason as to the cause of the disaster which a system of State banks will bring upon us. He thinks they will attribute it to the restrictions and not to liberty, for, he says, the Democrats will not institute the system in the name of liberty. On the contrary, that is just what they will do if they institute it at all. The radical Democrats put it forward as a libertarian, anti-paternalistic measure. But in whatever name it be instituted, the consequent disaster is bound to tell against free money. The people will look upon the new system as a change, and, should the change bring disaster, they would be indisposed to change thereafter. They do not make distinctions. Their ignorance leads them to confuse things essentially different. But, says Mr. Yarros, this ignorance exists, and in some way we must face it. Yes; let us then face it in the best way. Let us not make a change that will bring failure and thereby give ignorance an advantage. Let us oppose such a change, and make, instead, a change that is sure to succeed, leaving ignorance no opportunity for confusion. State banks are no more a necessary stage in the evolution of free banking than State Socialism is a necessary stage in the evolution of Anarchism. State Socialism may come, but it will postpone Anarchism if it does; State banks may come, but they will postpone free banking if they do. Mr. Yarros truly says that free banking will not be sent down to us from heaven. Equally true is it that it will not ooze up to us from hell. Religion and politics are alike powerless to achieve the social revolution. That is the work of Anarchism. And now, having sufficiently disagreed with Mr. Yarros upon politics, I am glad to agree with him in the prosecution of this work. T.

Corollaries.

— Having undertaken the task of "recording and interpreting the significant facts" of this year's political contest, I may as well make my record tolerably complete by offering a few comments on the result of the battle of ballots just over. That I am delighted with the outcome goes without saying. Though I favored the Democracy, not because I disliked it less, but because I hated its Republican adversary more, the magnificent, marvellous, unprecedented victory of the Democracy is a source of extreme gratification to me, and I frankly confess that I cannot sympathize with or even understand that frame of mind which permits a valiant soldier of liberty and implacable hater of organized fraud and corruption to regard with absolute indifference, if not with faint regret, the crushing defeat, the irreparable disaster, which the party of Wanamaker, Quay, and the rest of the pious liars and humbugs has at last brought upon itself. Of course it is very easy to exaggerate the significance of the recent political revolution; but it seems that it is no less easy to so underestimate it as to come near missing the moral altogether. To disarm all suspicion, let me declare right here in the most positive terms that I expect nothing of value to the cause of liberty from the Democracy, nothing, absolutely nothing. Complete as the control of the governmental machinery by the Democracy promises to be, not the slightest direct contribution to the real interests of progress is to be looked for at its hands. Should the Democrats ever display sense and spirit enough to justify any expectation of usefulness, the fact will certainly be accounted by me, no less than by Mr. Tucker, one of those inexplicable and almost miraculous turns which, as Mr. Tucker is aware, are occasionally witnessed in politics. I do not anticipate any genuine reform of the tariff; I do not expect an unqualified repeal of the ten per cent. tax on circulation; I am not sure even that a qualified repeal is among the probabilities; I entertain no hope with reference to anti-Comstock legislation; in short, I expect no direct benefits, no real remedial action, no pronounced progressive policy, from the next administration. Yet I rejoice and invite everybody to join me in celebrating the downfall of the Republican party.

— How can I? Why should I? For several reasons. In the first place, while it is doubtless true that there is a great deal of corruption, insincerity, selfishness, ignorance, and humbug in the Democratic party, it is nevertheless true that, as a party, Democracy now stands for some reforms, some things against which nothing can be said except that they are not *very* important or beneficial. Certainly, in demanding lower tariff taxes, State banking, more decency in pensions, the Democrats are right as far as they go, while, on these same issues, the Republicans are not only wrong as far as they go, but deliberately and knowingly wrong. All that can reasonably be said of the Democrats is that theoretically they are not as sound and bold as they might be and that practically they are not likely to go even to the length indicated in their written promises. But surely the Republicans have not even a *single* redeeming trait to "point with pride" to; their party is *shamelessly* corrupt, *openly* defiant, infatuated, reckless, mendacious, desperate. It does not even pay that homage to truth which lip-service implies. It banks on the ignorance and narrow selfishness of certain classes of voters, and relies *exclusively* on lying and bribery. To put such a party to utter rout is no small achievement. To secure a triumphant election of candidates under such serious difficulties as those created by Republican appeals to the lowest motives and feelings is no insignificant symptom. To eliminate forever the wild-cat scare and the pension nuisance as political weapons is no trifle. It is something to realize that the high-tariff Napoleon has found his Waterloo, that the old-soldier fraud has been removed, and that the wild-cat cry is played out. The Republican party cannot again resort to these instruments, cannot again use these discredited means. The overwhelming defeat cannot fail to impress even the worst of Republican Bourbons with the need of a new policy, new issues; and this means that we are to have, in the immediate future, splendid opportunities for the discussion of important problems. Again: the last election was really more than a stinging rebuke to the rotten and hopelessly depraved Republican party; it was, virtually, a threat and warning to the Democracy as well. When the people realized that the Republican party, once a party of progress and reform and high purposes, had outlived its usefulness and been converted by shrewd plotters into an agency of robbery and fraud; when it became apparent that the party had no *raison d'être* except as a conspiracy in the interest of a few manufacturers, — the voters of States solidly Republican calmly and deliberately signed its death warrant, thus serving notice on all other parties that political crimes do not go unpunished, and that parties must not allow themselves totally to forget the needs and interests of the masses, who have nothing to gain from mere changes of office-holders and tax-gatherers. Certainly it is encouraging to all of us to know that the people are not as stupid and gullible as the infatuated Republican campaigners imagined; that they are restless, wide-awake, and bent on obtaining some consideration for themselves. In a word, then, of all the political offenders, the Republican party was the worst and most reckless, and we should all be glad that it has been given its quietus. The Democracy's turn may come next, but it is certain that in this struggle the Democracy deserved to win. I know that the people will be bitterly disappointed in their hopes, and that no material improvement in their condition will follow from their action in the last election. They will secure no reforms worthy of the name from the new government; they will find plutocracy as rampant as ever and monopoly as supreme. But these disappointments are inevitable, and are moreover good for them — and for us. They will lose faith in government only after repeated experiments and trials; they will not be struck with the idea of trusting to their own free efforts and dispensing with government "coöperation" in their economic affairs until after a great many more abuses of trust by political parties.

— But the above are not the only reasons why we should congratulate ourselves and the people over the result of the election. No positive good of the least consequence is to be looked for from any *direct* action of the new government; but negative and indirect results are sometimes very important. Now, the Democracy, abused by Reed as the do-nothing party, is at least certain not to multiply mischief and meddlesome legislation, not to add to the invasive legislation on the statute-books. Paternalistic and centralizing tendencies will be checked for a time; further encroachments will be prevented; and such

energy as we possess will be wholly devoted to the elimination of traditional injustice rather than diverted to the resistance of new inroads. There will be an opportunity for some repeal agitation, which, whether successful or not, will at least have an educative influence. The Democrats in power will do very little, but the radical Democrats outside will demand a good deal, while the individualists and Anarchists will point out the complete solution, and the effects of such a campaign of education must be great and lasting. And here I may touch upon the question of the probable action of Congress on banking, and comment on Mr. Tucker's criticism. Surprise is expressed that I, who deem the currency question of the highest importance, should find it essential to dislodge the Republicans at a time when they are far less mischievous with respect to this most important issue than their opponents. Now, it is true, as Mr. Tucker avers, that to continue the present financial system is better for the free-banking movement than to precipitate another system of government-restricted banking, less secure, in the name of free banking. But no such danger really confronts us. We cannot protest too much against confounding State banking with free banking, but the truth is that the Democrats have largely relieved us from this disagreeable duty. They have done, and continue to do, so much protesting that there is simply no excuse for any one not an idiot to suspect that Congress is about to confer any freedom on us in this matter. It seems safe to say that whatever is going to be done in the matter will be done plainly and loudly in the name, not of freedom, but of the State. The tax on circulation will not be repealed unconditionally; there will be all sorts of restrictions and conditions; and if the system fails, the failure will be attributed either to the restrictions or to the geographical change. In either case, free banking will not be injured. Indeed, it will be benefited; for the failure of State banks restricted and regulated will leave only two alternatives in the field, — free banking and fiat government money, or Greenbackism. Mr. Tucker must admit that there is no justice in holding Democrats responsible for the ignorant imaginings or confusion of certain people. Did the Democrats propose their State banks under the name or guise of free banks, they could be held responsible for the resulting confusion and harm; since, however, they do not make any such pretence, but distinctly repudiate the imputation of the intention to confer greater freedom, there is nothing to base an indictment upon. As to the confusion due, not to misrepresentation and false pretence, but to pure ignorance, that cannot be avoided, and we may as well face and grapple with it now. Free banking will not be sent down from heaven; it will come gradually, and the Democratic scheme of State banks is one of the necessary phases or stages in the course of the development of free banking.

— Well, I have had my say on the political questions, and am glad to be done with the subject. Now for other and more serious as well as satisfactory work.

V. Y.

Every Act a Sacrifice.

[Friedrich Nietzche]

People are always glorifying sacrifice; but let them cite a human action which is not a sacrifice, — the sacrifice of that which pleases us less for that which pleases us more.

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